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CAVIES

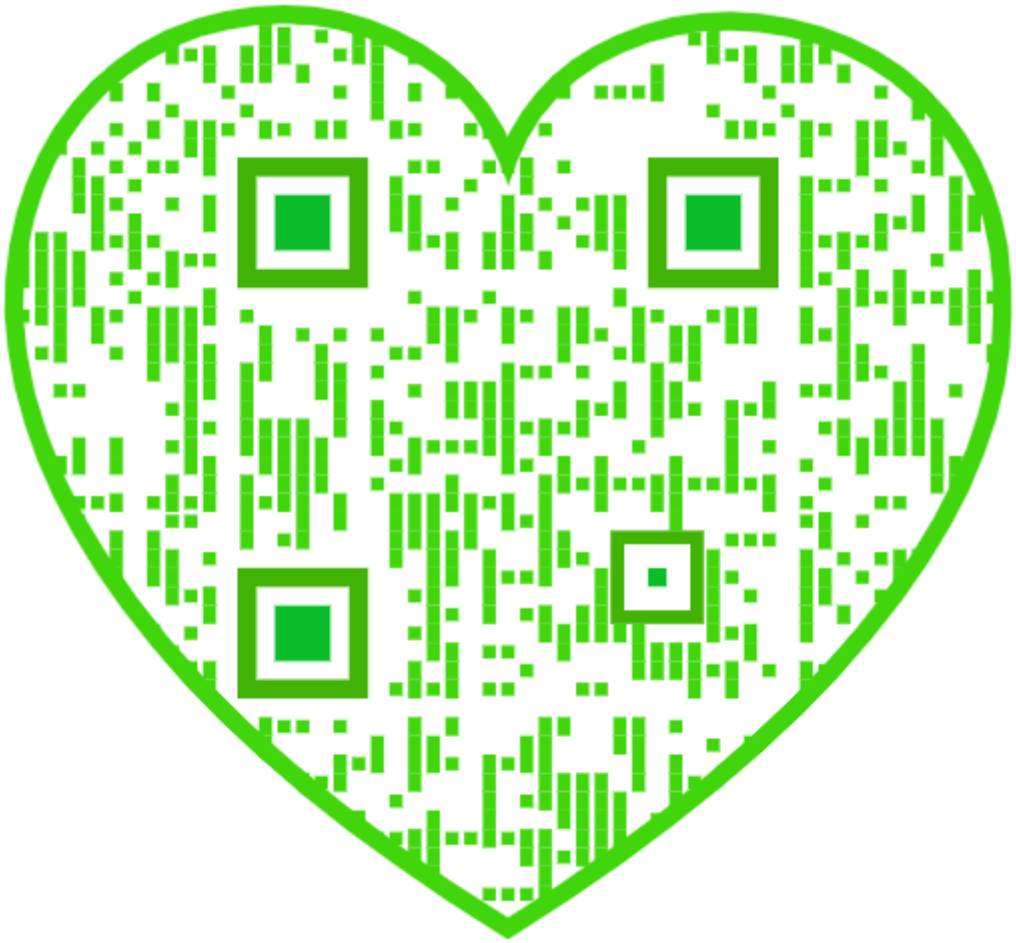
THEIR VARIETIES

How To Feed, Breed, Condition and Market Them

By JAMES E. YOUNG

FIRST EDITION

Price 50 Cents



"JIM" YOUNG

CAVIES

THEIR VARIETIES — HOW TO FEED, BREED, CONDITION AND MARKET THEM

BY

JAMES E. YOUNG

Licensed Judge

Member Board Directors National Breeders Assn.

President Chicago Breeders Association

Breeder of Young's Famous Tortoise and Whites and Blacks

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by

JAMES E. YOUNG

Chicago

1918

W. A. Brown
Printer, Engraver and Binder
5113 Strong Street
Chicago

APR 29 1918

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Introduction

Some years ago I visited a friend who had a few cavies in the basement of his home. I still recall, as if it were yesterday, the strong feeling of sympathy that arose within me for this poor misguided soul, who was, as I termed it, "wasting his time" raising guinea pigs. I felt truly sorry for him and more so for his dependent family, and I then and there vowed that "Father" would never be guilty of adding a burden like this to his family cares. To me it seemed very plain that there was no importance in the raising of guinea pigs. I was willing, of course, to concede that children could raise them for pets but for "grown ups" to interest themselves, was to me an indication of something lacking in man's mental makeup.

This briefly, was my view and this experience only strengthened it. I can only plead ignorance for such a stand and I am making this confession in the hope that others who still think as I thought then, will profit by my mistake and become converted without the humiliation of finding themselves so entirely ignorant as I was. The biggest thing I ever did was to acknowledge my error and in doing so, I became such a staunch defender of the cavy, that today, my greatest pride lies in the fact that I have been successful in scientifically producing some of the greatest cavies that have ever graced the show room. I have found that cavy breeding is something that requires brains and skill and a lifetime study that will still leave many points to learn.

In the chapters that follow I have tried to give practical information on how to successfully raise cavies in a way that will demand prices ranging from $5 to $25 each. A few years ago 25c to 50c was considered a good price. Today, however, the $10 cavy is common and there are sales of which we have official record, showing that as high as $100 has been paid for a single specimen. There are cavies worth much more than this, but the owners will not sell them at any price as their loss would undo years of work in scientific breeding.

Responsible breeders use as much judgment in breeding cavies as is used in breeding hogs, sheep, cattle and horses. Cavy raising has become a science and to produce through proper breeding, the markings and other points the standard calls for, requires no little skill.

The pet stock journals, the pet stock clubs and associations and the pet stock shows, are largely responsible for the wonderful progress in breeding that has resulted in making cavy raising an industry of vast importance. The journals have been the big means of creating interest and should have the support of everyone interested in pet stock —support not only through subscribing but through advertising as well. I have often heard breeders say they did not have to advertise because the demand was greater than the supply. They seem to forget that the journals brought this condition about. They are too quick to forget their benefactors and they show poor judgment in not continuing their advertising. The shows, too, deserve the fullest support. They are another means of converting new

people to pet stock interest. Only a few years ago, one could count on two hands the few men that assumed the burden of making shows successful. These pioneers of the show room are the men that have made it easy for us to hold the big exhibitions of today. They spent dollars and received only criticism in return. It is to these men who continued the good work under great difficulties, that we owe much. It is they who made possible the big show of today with its 500 to 700 specimens. Some of these men are still with us and can verify the truth of my statements. Roy C. Knill, George Eckert and the Blumhagen Bros., are prominent among those who sacrificed time and money in the early show days for the good of cavies. John Fehr, W. I. Lyon, Mead Mayhew and Judge Gibson did the same thing for the rabbit industry. These men are all in the front ranks today, working with the old-time fervor and furnishing constructive ideas that steadily uplift the pet stock world.

We have a National Breeders Association with a membership exceeding 4,000, and branch clubs in almost every important city in America. The beginner's first move should be to join the nearest local pet stock organization and through them the National. It is all one big fraternity and you are given an opportunity to meet other fanciers, exchange ideas and compare views. This comparison is educational and will result in the use of improved methods in selection, breeding, feeding and housing. The new breeder is always welcome. It is our earnest desire to start him right and keep him right and we realize that only by fair treatment can this be done.

This is one of the big purposes of the Associations. It is the main purpose of the pages to come and if the author has through these pages extended "a helping hand" that will assist beginners across the rocks and shoals of inexperience, he will feel more than repaid for the time, effort and money expended.

Cavy Breeds and Their Varieties

There are several breeds and varieties of breeds in cavies. While all breeds are good, it is best to center your efforts on one particular breed just as successful stock raisers do. Experience has proven that people are most successful in raising the breed they fancy the most. You need only attend the pet stock exhibitions or the frequent lawn shows to find a wide variety of breeds from which to select the particular breed or variety you admire most. Do not make the mistake of trying to raise numerous breeds; the result will be that you will always have a lot of cavies to feed and no surplus of any one breed for sale, besides the fact that such methods usually mean lower quality stock.

The chapter following takes up separately each breed and its varieties, describing the markings, characteristics and methods of breeding, feeding and housing.

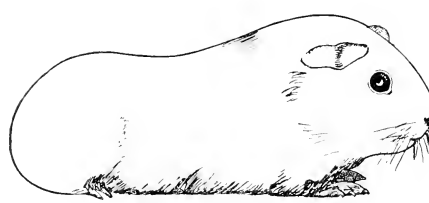
English Cavies

The English cavy is distinctive in that it is the only smooth, short-haired breed. It outranks all other breeds in popularity as it is one of the easiest to raise and keep in condition. This holds true of all its numerous varieties, which are distinguished only by their color, as follows: Black, White, Red, Cream, Blue, Chocolate, Tortoise and White, Tortoise Shell, Golden Agouti, Silver Agouti, Himalayan, Dutch Marked, Broken Colors, and Brindle.

The Black, Red, Tortoise and White, Cream and White English predominate in the show room.

Perfect Specimens

The color requirements of the English are: Solid and even color throughout the body; good lustre free from off colored hairs. I have found brush-



A PERFECT SPECIMEN

ing the coat with a fine, soft brush adds greatly to the lustre.

The head and shoulders should be broad and heavy. The nose should be Roman and not pointed or of the rat type. The ears should drop naturally,

not falling or hanging down. Do not be discouraged if the ears of your young stock stand high as they seldom fall or take their right position until 4 to 6 months old. The coat of the English cavy should be smooth and close without any corrugation. The eyes of a perfect specimen should stand out large, bold and well proportioned. The condition of the cavy counts ten points in the selection of show room winners; and unless the specimen exhibited is in good condition it is impossible to win where competition is strong. Condition is of greater importance than type, for without condition there is little type. English cavies must be fat to show type. The deep broad shoulders so much desired, show only in the pig that is properly fattened and that is what is meant by condition as applied to their breed.

The Black English

The hard point in breeding the black variety of English is to produce a silky, deep, even, black color running all the way to the skin and equally distributed over the entire body. The presence of brown or slate undercolor is considered an imperfection. Such color is most likely to show up right in back of the shoulders and breeders find great difficulty in eliminating it. Many breeders of blacks use some brood sows with just a trifle of red in them. This produces the rich gloss that is required.

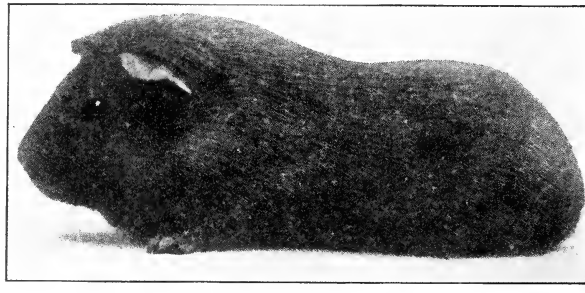
Size is one of the most important factors in breeding. My Blacks were running rather small, and to increase their size I mated a Tortoise and White sow that is noted for producing offspring of wonderful size with my best Black boar. I not

only increased the size of my Blacks through this mating but intensified their color as well, another point that must be considered if one is to produce Blacks that will win. The boars from this mating must not be used in any future matings, however, but the sows can be bred back to the father with excellent results, regardless of the fact that they have red or white mixture of color.

Too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the necessity of using a solid black boar of the best possible type in mating. In choosing breeding stock it is very important to select your best specimens and dispose of the lesser quality stock for laboratory purposes. A few odd colored hairs do not disqualify unless they are all in one patch.

The Red English

Wonderful improvement in the breeding of this variety has been shown in recent years. At first they ran very uneven in color, ranging in color from



PRIZE-WINNING RED BOAR, RED HOT II.

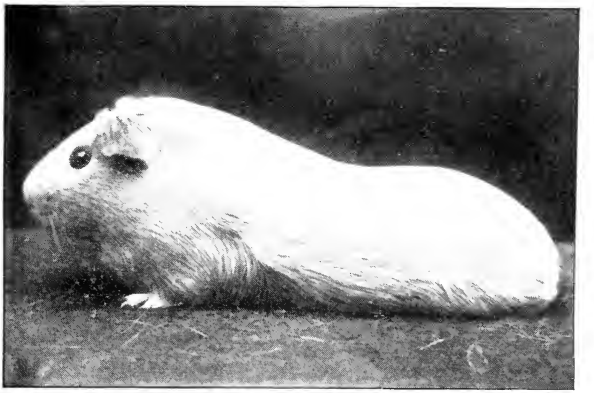
Owned by George Eckert

Winner First, Chicago, Winner First and Cup at Colorado Springs, Winner of First and Cup at Kansas City

an orange color to anything but the deep red that they have today. The feet should be the same deep red color as the body; breeders have found this hard to accomplish although at the present writing, marked improvement has been shown. The ears and toe nails should also be the same color as the body. Frequently the ears are dark and while this is not a disqualification it is a defect. Breeders use some sows with a little white and some with a little black in order to produce a richer, deeper red. Poor specimens should be discarded; only the best you have should be used in breeding, for it is by this method alone that you will improve your stock. Other requirements of the Reds are the same as discussed under the heading, "Perfect Specimens."

The English Creams

A variety that has come to the front very fast, despite the difficulty in breeding, due to the neces-



ENGLISH CREAM CAVY
Owned by W. L. Crawford, Chicago. First, Chicago, 1915

sity of frequently crossing in of a white sow with the cream boar in order to produce the delicate cream color that is so desirable. It is hard to maintain evenness of color in this variety and it is only the skill and science of breeders that has brought about the wonderful color specimens to be seen in the show room of today. The feet of the Creams should be the same color as the body and the ears either cream or flesh colored without any dark lacings on the edges. Other requirements same as discussed under heading, "Perfect Specimens."

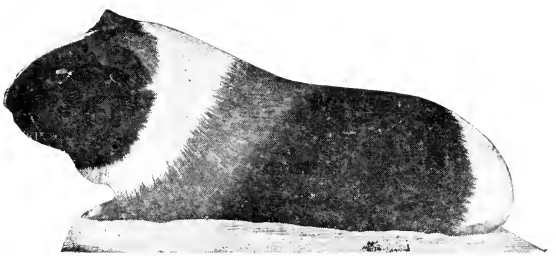
The English White

The pure white cavy has many attractions and is among the most popular varieties of the great cavy family. Color should be snow-white without any cream tint. Feet and ears should match body, color and eyes should be large, bold and pink. Black eyes are a disqualification. Dark lacing around the edges of the ears is common among the whites and while this does not disqualify—it is a serious defect that should be avoided. Remember that you can gain perfection only through breeding from your best specimens. Care in selection of breeding stock is one of the first requisites of success.

The Tortoise and White

The Tortoise and White is known as the "Three-Colored Cavy" and the fame for its beauty has circled the globe. To me, it is the most interesting of all cavies. Its colors come in patches of red, white and black. The objective point in breeding is to produce as many clean cut patches as possible—patches to be equally divided on each side of the

body and showing separate and distinct, each from the other. To accomplish this will prove one of the most interesting studies ever undertaken. No two pigs are alike and before the mother kindles you are anticipating what the next surprise will be. The White in the Tortoise and White variety is one of the hardest to control in color, as it seems determined to stay in one patch, sometimes starting at the point of the nose, broadening out and again narrowing, but always with the connecting link of color,



"SOME BOY"
Champion Boar—South Shore Country Club

even though it may dwindle to the size of a thread. The requirements for perfect specimens are as follows: Patches clean cut and distinct, equally and uniformly distributed. Color: Black, red and white, even throughout, with no inter-blending of colors. The ears may be one, two or three colors. The remaining points are the same as discussed under the heading, "Perfect Specimens."

In breeding, the specimens with the fewer patches are chosen, providing the patches are coarse, clean cut and distinct. It is hard to follow a fixed line in this breeding, man's own intelligence secured through actual experiments in the mating of this

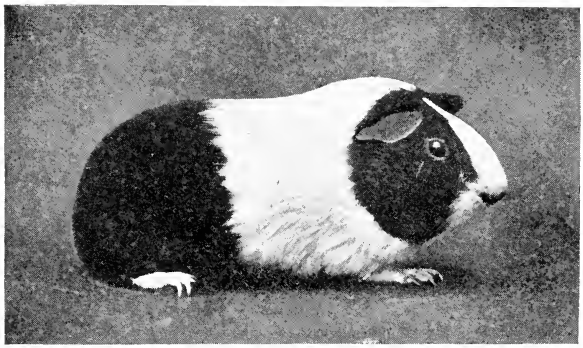
wonderful variety seems to count more in gaining the sought for points than perhaps the breeding of any other breed or its variety.

The Tortoise Shell

The Tortoise Shell is one of the real beauties of the cavy family. It is similar to the Tortoise and White, excepting it has only two colors, black and red. It is hard to understand why it is not bred more extensively, for it has many good points in its favor and can be easily popularized. Here is an opportunity for some cavy fancier to get busy. The Tortoise Shell certainly deserves more attention, and there is a wonderful opportunity, through correct breeding, to add much to their attractiveness. The Standard requires that the color be equally distributed and in distinct patches, the smaller and more uniform, the better. The remaining breeding requirements are the same as discussed under the heading, "Perfect Specimens."

Dutch Marked English

Marked the same as the Dutch Rabbit; black and white, blue and white, tortoise and white, and red and white. Each cheek is black and a coat of black covers the back portion of the body, the balance of the body being white, making a straight line around the body where the black and white meets. This is a hard variety to breed, but it is well thought of, and is, without question, a meritorious variety when exhibited according to the standard requirements.



DUTCH MARKED ENGLISH SOW
Winnings: First and Special Silver Medal for Best Cavy, at Boston, 1915; First and Special for Best Dutch Cavy, at Brooklyn, N. Y., 1915
Owned and Bred by T. A. Martin, Jr., Midland Park, N. J.

Himalayan

Himalayans are coming into their own and more of them are seen in the show room of today than at any time in cavy history. They are a very beautiful animal, their body being pure white with ears, nose and feet black. There has been marked improvement in this variety in the past few years; there has been some difficulty in getting the markings black, as it had a tendency to come brown; this, however, has been overcome to a great extent so that today we see many good specimens in the show rooms.

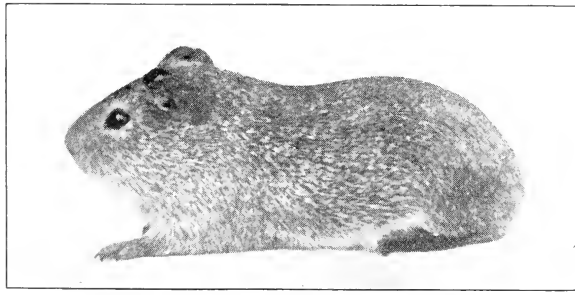
Golden Agouti

One of the most beautiful of the English varieties. The perfect Golden specimen has a rich, golden brown undercolor with guard hairs that are ticked with black, making even overcolor throughout. The belly color should be a deep red.

It is hard to do justice to this breed in writing. Its popularity is increasing rapidly, due to the fact that more are being exhibited at the big shows, thus giving the public an opportunity to see the real beauty and attractiveness of the Golden Agouti. With this great English variety "seeing is believing," and in all my show-room experience I have never heard any other than praise for this great breed. Much of this interest is no doubt due to the wonderful type and color.

Silver Agouti

The Silver Agouti is a light silver shade, with guard hairs ticked the same as in the Goldens. The belly is of silver hue and should be free from any



SILVER AGOUTI
Owned by Condon & Kemp, Chicago. First at Chicago, 1918

sign of golden or bronze tint. In both the Golden and Silver Agouti, the feet should match the body.

There is no variety that has made the wonderful improvement that the Silver has in the last few years, coming from a cream tinge color to a beautiful silver. And when of the proper color it is one

of the beauties of the show room. The above cut pictures one of the best specimens we ever had the pleasure of seeing.

English Brindles

The Brindles are one of the rarest varieties known. The color is black and red, intermingling evenly, all over the body and feet. While the Brindle Cavy is a very pretty specimen, it has not gained the popularity to the extent other varieties have. Their general specifications are the same as found under the heading, "Perfect Specimens."

English Chocolates

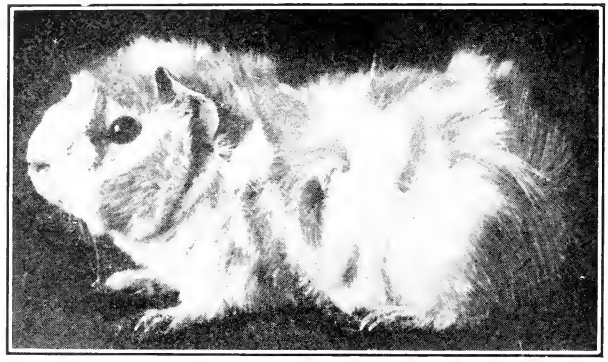
The Chocolates are one of the latest additions to the English Cavy family, and are attracting considerable attention. They are a very beautiful animal, having derived their name from their color. Their color should be uniform all over the body and feet. See "Perfect Specimens" for general specifications.

English Blue

This breed is the latest addition to the cavy family, and while, of course, there is room for considerable improvement, it is only a question of time before they are perfected to a degree that will interest all cavy fanciers. At present they are not breeding true, more slate or faded-out black color predominating the blue color sought for. It is an illustration, however, of the breeding possibilities before us. We have only touched the ragged edges, compared to the improvement that will be shown in all breeds within the next few years.

The Abyssinian

Another fine specimen of the cavy family in several colors. It should be large throughout and broad at the shoulders. The hair, unlike the English, should be rough and wiry with as many rosettes as possible. The head must be well furnished with hair, which must in no part exceed one



CREAM ABYSSINIAN SOW
Winnings: First and Special at Madison Square, New York, and Asbury Park, N. J.; First, Grand Central Palace, N. Y., 1914
Owned and Bred by T. A. Martin, Jr., Midland Park, N. J.

and one-half inches in length. The only things to breed for are: Size, rosettes and coarse hair. Breeding stock should be selected accordingly.

Peruvian Cavy

The Peruvian comes in solid and broken colors and is one real fancy specimen of the cavy family. It attracts wide-spread attention and in proper conditions creates considerable speculation as to which end of the cavy is the head. This is because

the head furnishings cover the head entirely. The hair on the Peruvian has been known to grow fifteen to eighteen inches long.

It is necessary to keep each cavy separate, if its coat is to grow to its best, as they will barber each other if allowed to run together in the same pen. They seem to have a mania for cutting off each other's hair. Peruvian breeders should bear this

PERUVIAN CAVY
Winner of Cups and many First and Special Prizes. The property of Miss Daphne Varcoe, Falmouth

fact in mind as a short coated Peruvian would stand little chance of scoring in a show where there is any competition. Length of coat is one of the most important points considered by the judge. The standard allows twenty points alone for length of coat, twenty points for head furnishings, twenty points for mane and sides, twenty points for texture and density of coat making a total of eighty points on coat alone.

In breeding, great care should be used and only breed to specimens having good head furnishings,

too many of the specimens shown today are very weak in this point.

Peruvian Silky (Angora)

The Peruvian Silky is very much the same as the Peruvian, with the exception that it does not have the head furnishings and the hair is even more soft and silky. It is raised more for the fancy than for market purposes, and makes a very attractive pet for the grown-up as well as for the children.

The Market for Cavies

Success with cavies lies entirely with the individual. You can not blame the cavy for failure. I do not know of any animal that can be raised as cheaply—not even barring the alley cat. The cost of feed for one year does not exceed 25c per cavy.

As in other lines of the live stock industry, cavy raising has both the so-called "utility" and "fancy" market. The utility trade is for experimental purposes, used in the testing and analyzing of serums and antitoxins by laboratories, hospitals, veterarian and medical colleges. A market can be found by writing any of the above-named institutes. The laboratory demand for cavies is enormous and it is surprising the number one can dispose of in this way. Prices range from $6.00 to $15.00 per dozen. The demand is for an animal weighing from seven ounces or above, and with proper care a cavy will attain this weight in about six weeks. Another market is in the sale of cavies as house pets, as it is very seldom that they ever bite or scratch, as they are very clean and with little care are odorless, hence making a very attractive pet for the family.

The best prices received is in the sale of show specimens and breeding stock.

Cavy fanciers who live in the city and have not the time or space to raise cavies in large numbers, devote their efforts almost entirely to producing specimens for the show room. To breed cavies scientifically to meet the standard requirements of the exhibition cavy is a fascination.

There is real enjoyment in experimenting with the different specimens in an effort to produce something a little nearer to the standard and a little bit better than the "Other Fellow." And so we go on from year to year, exhibiting the results of our efforts from season to season and getting closer and closer to the ideal specimen we have endeavored through all these years to reach. The big exhibitors each year show a steady advance in quality and are nearer the "sought for" today than ever before.

When a breeder wins a blue ribbon at one of the big shows—the price for his stock advances considerably in value. The reason for this is the eagerness with which breeders seek this winning blood in order to raise their own stock to the same degree of perfection. From this, friend reader, you can see the possibilities before you in raising cavies for the show room. If you use good judgment in selection and mating, you will be rewarded with prizes in the shows and there will be a demand for your stock greater than you can fill and at prices that will make cavy raising one of the most profitable enterprises in which you have ever engaged. Remember, you cannot get big prices without first making a reputation in the shows and advertising in the pet stock journals.

Housing

Cavies are housed in what are known as hutches. The hutch varies from a common packing box to the fanciest kind of furniture. One may be just as successful with the common box as with more expensive equipment, providing, it is surrounded with proper conditions. In cold climates, the boxes are suitable only for use where there is heat, usually in the basement, as an outdoor proposition it is inadvisable except in warm weather.

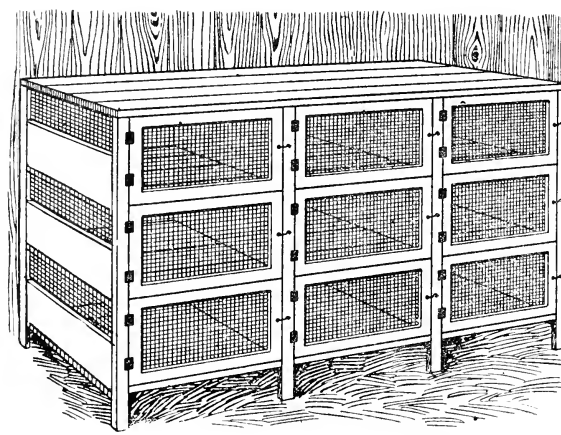
The basement should not be used, however, if it has any tendency to dampness. Dampness will cause pneumonia, and this dreaded disease is a sure, quick death to cavies and will spread to all your cavies once it gets started. I have known breeders to lose all their cavies in a week's time through a pneumonia epidemic.

The cavy is very clean and practically odorless. The writer personally favors the indoor hutch and has arranged his own equipment in the basement of his home. The advantage in this arrangement lies in the fact that breeding may be continued throughout cold weather, whereas it is impossible to breed in outdoor hutches during the winter unless artificial heat is supplied. The hutches should be cleaned at least once a week.

Indoor Hutches

A box 24x24, ten or twelve inches deep, will accommodate four pigs. These boxes can be arranged in tiers, one on top of the other, the door in this case must be on the side of each box instead of on

top as we have it where there is only a single tier. Make the door the full size of each box, this door can be made of one by two inch strips covered over with wire netting, hinge at the bottom. When a single box is used it is not necessary to have a door, as the top of the box may be left open where there is no danger of cats, dogs, or rats getting into the hutch; these hutches should stand at least 18 inches



Practical Type of Indoor Hutch.

off the floor. Another indoor hutch quite commonly used is built as follows: The structure is 5 feet high, 24 inches wide and 6 feet long—larger or smaller sizes in the same proportion. With the dimensions used here there are four floors; the first floor is built about 12 inches from the ground, this allows a foot of space between each floor. The length is partitioned into three spaces, two feet each. Where it is desirable, some of these partitions may be removed

so that the young stock and common specimens may run together, it being necessary to separate the breeding pens. Ventilation is one of the important factors and should be considered in placing your hutches, arranging them so that a draft will not come in contact with the cavies.

Outdoor Hutches

To insure protection from storms and cold weather, the outdoor hutch must be weather tight and as an extra precaution—a box within the hutch, where the pigs can huddle together when the outer quarters are too cold. This box should be plentifully supplied with a bedding of prairie hay. A box with a hole in one end will do for this purpose. Outdoor hutches may be constructed in much the same manner as the indoor, with the exception, of course, that greater care must be used on construction to guard against severe weather conditions. This hutch must be storm proof.

In the summer, pens may be built of fine wire netting, using a one-inch poultry netting for the bottom. These pens should be built small enough so as they are easily moved from place to place on the lawn, thus saving you the task of cutting it, as well as securing good green food for themselves and fertilizing the ground. These hutches should be built fifteen to eighteen inches in height and covered over with wire netting to prevent cats, dogs, or rats from getting to the Cavies. A small tight box should be provided for sleeping quarters and a protection from storm and should contain plenty of prairie hay.

Feeding

Varieties of Feed

This is very important. Keeping cavies on one food will soon have them losing their bright eyes, lustrous coats, becoming poorer in flesh and taking on a haggard appearance, as they soon tire of the sameness in diet.

It is easy enough to feed variety in the summer time. Carrot tops, beet tops, turnips, a few cabbage leaves (not too many, for cabbage tends to cause diarrhoea), lettuce, lawn clippings and weeds from the garden can be alternated in a way that will furnish plenty of variety.

Winter feeding is discussed separately in the pages following.

Nothing but the very cleanest and choicest foods should be fed. Musty hay or oats are disastrous. In feeding green food, such as clippings from the lawn, or any green food, great care should be taken not to feed anything that has commenced to heat or spoil.

Regularity of Feed

Regularity of feeding should be followed very religiously. We recommend feeding twice daily, morning and evening, and at a fixed hour, whatever hour you have fixed for feeding. Do it on time, your cavies will soon know the time and when you come near remind you of it.

Cost of Feeding

As stated before the cavy can be fed at a minimum expense as compared to any other live stock.

The feeding problem is very simple. In summer, nature supplies practically everything in one's own yard that is required for summer feeding. Lawn clippings, weeds from the garden, carrot tops, outside leaves of lettuce, beet tops, etc., in fact, all things green appeal to the cavy. That great scourge to lawns, the dandelion, is one of their choicest morsels.

Some prairie hay and oats must be fed even in summer and it is best to keep the hutches well bedded with hay at all times. Note the emphasis is made upon the kind of hay. This point is called to your attention because experience has proven prairie hay by far the most preferable. Care should be exercised in changing from winter to summer feeding as too rapid a return to green feed is liable to cause bowel trouble.

Winter Feed

In winter it is more difficult to furnish a variety of feed. However, this can be overcome by occasionally feeding dry bran making a warm mash, by mixing boiled vegetables with it, steaming or soaking in hot water. Oats, corn, barley, rye, or boiled rice make an excellent feed.

When corn is soaked, it swells to twice its normal size. This makes it easy for the cavies to eat, and while they are not fond of it to begin with, after they have become accustomed to having it placed before them they take to it quite readily.

Keep plenty of prairie hay and oats before them at all times. Table scraps, such as dry bread, lettuce leaves, celery tops, apple and potato peelings,

or any refuse in the vegetable line are good. Dry bread may be moistened in milk to make more palatable. It is especially good for brood sows while caring for their young. Carrots and sprouted oats are the principal green foods for the winter diet. It is advisable to buy your carrots in the fall when they are the cheapest, storing them in a cool cellar or pit. If possible, it is well to raise them yourself. If the carrot becomes dried and wrinkled, a good soaking in water will restore them to their natural condition.

Cavies are fond of all roots, such as beets, turnips, and even raw or boiled potatoes. Mangels are also good. All these suggestions are given that the reader may be impressed with the necessity for variety in feeding if the best results are to be obtained.

The writer has been feeding sprouted oats for years and has found them very satisfactory. The oats should be placed in a bucket about two-thirds full and covered over with luke-warm water and allowed to stand at least 24 hours, then pour into the sprouting frames. The writer has a frame constructed as follows: Length, 6 feet; width, 18 inches; frame made of 1x4 lumber, nailed together edgewise to the above dimensions and lathed closely across the bottom, allowing the water to drain off without permitting the oats to go through. This frame should stand three feet above the floor. Pour the oats in one end of the frame until about three inches deep and water once a day. It is very important that you mix them well each time you water, until they begin to sprout. New oats may be added to the tray from day to day so that one end of the tray is

ready to feed while the other is just starting. Three pounds of oats will make about 12 pounds of green food. The best time to feed is when the sprouts are about one and one-half inches long, this is just before they turn green and are found to be more juicy and tender. Water oats just before feeding. We have found a light sprinkling of salt on the oats about once a month serves as an excellent tonic. Any basement with heat is an ideal place to sprout oats.

There are many different methods of sprouting and numerous different sprouting frames. It is well to inspect the sprouters on sale at supply stores as a different sprouter than that described here may be better suited to your particular needs. In many instances wire netting is used as the floor of the frame in place of lath, a heavy wire, however, should be used as the lighter wire will soon rust out.

Water

As strange as it may sound, nevertheless, it is true that water is not a necessity if plenty of green food is fed. In fact, I believe cavies are in better health without water. Certain it is, they do not miss it or require it if they get plenty of green food.

The writer has never watered his cavies and I question if there is any healthier stock to be found anywhere and as few losses.

Breeding

There are no fixed lines in breeding other than to begin with the best possible color and type. The judgment of the individual in respect to selection and mating is the big factor in producing quality stock. Experience is the best teacher and only through careful studying and experimenting can one hope to learn the many intricate points to be mastered. The breeder is confronted with one hundred and one different problems in breeding, problems that are different with each breeder and that he must work out for himself along scientific lines applied to the particular case in hand. There are, however, several set rules in breeding which must be observed if any headway is made.

A sow should not be bred more than four times a year at the outside, and preferably three, if the stock is to be vigorous and healthy. In mating the male should be strong in points where the female is weak and vice versa. If you have a male of exceedingly good color, the female should then be exceptionally strong in type.

The color, coat, eyes and bone come from the male in most instances. Size and type usually come from the female. Never breed a cavy that has a ratty-appearing head.

After the sow kindles it is well to place three or four sows with young together, as some only have one pig while others have three or four. Poor nursing sows, or those that you find produce undersized young, should be eliminated from breeding pens and

used for laboratory purposes. In this way the feeding can be equally distributed, as the young will take to any mother and the mother will nurse another's young.

Frequently there will be a real small, possibly deformed or seemingly half paralyzed and weakened pig in the litter of young. Where these are found it is well to put them out of their misery at once, for experience has proved that the small cavies never develop into any size, and the weakened, sickly kind die anyway.

When the young are three or four weeks old they should be weaned from their mothers and sexes divided as they will breed at this age if not separated. Early breeding is disastrous and prevents proper growth, and the results are undersized cavies. Size, it must be remembered, is one of the most important points of consideration in the show-room. The poorer quality specimens should be disposed of for laboratory usage and the most promising retained for breeders and the show room. If you have one exceptionally promising youngster it is well to leave it with its mother so as to give it the benefit of all the nourishment its mother can supply, thus assuring it of every possible advantage that will aid rapid development and healthy growth. Brood sows that show signs of fight should be removed to another hutch as a change of company usually quiets them. The period of gestation is approximately 70 days, the young are fully developed when born, and in an hour or so are nursing.

Line Breeding

No better method of producing good, uniform stock has yet been discovered than the system of line breeding practiced by all breeders of pure bred live stock. While this system has been termed inbreeding, it is not inbreeding in a true sense, for only the best stock is used. It is not a case of breeding the poorest and weakest of your stock but only the best. Line-breeding is the continued mating of fathers and daughters and sons and mothers for several generations. In no case should brother and sister be bred together. Inbreeding is successful only when healthy, vigorous stock is used. The mating of weak stock will prove disastrous.

It is important, therefore, to keep a correct record of the pedigree of your stock. To do this, the sow should always be kept separate from the rest of your stock while kindling. The writer has followed this system of line-breeding with very successful results. The animals should be at least six months old before being bred.

Conditioning for the Show

In conditioning cavies for the show it is advisable to hutch the stock separately, or in lots of not more than two. Plenty of green food should be given them during the conditioning period. A small pinch of Oil Meal should be fed two or three times a week as it gives lustre to the cavy's coat, an important point in the show room. As large a variety of food should be fed so as to put on as much flesh as possible.

Handle the specimens you expect to exhibit as often as possible so that they will become tame as they then show to a better advantage. Brush the coat every day with a soft brush or rub with a soft cloth for a week before exhibiting.

It is advisable to wash White Cavies before showing, to remove all hutch stains and dirt in the hair, making the cavy appear to much better advantage.

In washing cavies we use the following solution: Cut one-half bar of Ivory soap into about one quart of water (depending upon the number of cavies to be washed); boil until dissolved, then let stand until cool.

Have two buckets or small tubs of warm water. Apply soap solution to cavy, rubbing well into the hair, using one bucket to wash them in and the other to rinse them in. A little bluing may be added to the rinsing water, tending to give them a whiter appearance. Rub dry with rags.

Stroke frequently with the hand, as it accustoms them to handling.

How to Ship

Cavies are one of the easiest animals to ship. A light, strong box serves the purpose. Plenty of ventilation must be provided in such a way that it will be impossible for drafts, or by express companies piling boxes or packages so as to smother them. Never ship more than four or six cavies in a box or compartment, as where too many are together they are liable to crowd in one corner and suffocate. It is well to use clean, attractive boxes or cases with your name and address thereon. An attractive, practical box is made as follows: A box 12x18 inches, 10 inches high, (which will accommodate two or three animals); make frame for cover so it will project over the edge one inch. This frame to be covered with wire netting as used on screen doors. The frame projecting over the edge prevents any chance of a box of package being piled so close as to cause suffocation. A few holes on each side of the box near the top is advisable for ventilation in case anything is set on top. A box of this size is practical for ordinary shipments, but where long shipments are made a larger box is required on account of food.

A coat of paint or kalsomine makes this a very attractive case and adds prestige to the shipper.

Diseases and Their Treatment

Cavies are not subject to many diseases and with proper care, clean wholesome food and cleanliness in their quarters (which should be frequently disinfected) the breeder will experience very little trouble.

The writer does not believe in treating cavies that are diseased unless it is diarrhoea or other minor diseases.

Diarrhoea

This disease is usually caused by too sudden a change of food or overfeeding of green food. Remove specimen to separate quarters, feed plenty of good prairie hay and oats, with very little green food for three or four days.

Constipation

Is usually caused by not enough green food.

Lice

This is usually caused by unclean quarters. Spray hutches well with a good disinfectant and use a good insect powder on the animals.

Cuts and Bruises

Sponge injured parts with warm water and use a good healing salve.

Paralysis or Rheumatism

Caused by damp quarters or improper feeding. In cases of this kind we destroy the animal.

Going Light

Quite often a cavy, where there are several of them together, will go light or apparently has tuberculosis. In most cases of this kind you will find the animal is timid and the others drive her from her food, her condition is thus caused by starvation. Remove the animal to separate quarters and give plenty of green food, if no improvement is shown, destroy.

Worms

Worms are very uncommon, but should they appear, a good worm medicine as used for children will remedy the trouble.

Premature Birth

Quite often this is caused by handling the female while she is pregnant, fright, bad quarters or overcrowding. We recommend that a female shall not be handled after she commences to show signs of pregnancy.

Flashes

In making your start, buy your stock from some good reliable breeder who has won at the big shows. Tell him what you want and how much money you have to spend.

Do not expect customers to run to you at first to buy your stock. You must show, win and advertise, you will then be surprised at the numbers you can sell and the prices you will receive.

Give your customer $1.25 in value for every dollar he spends; it is good, cheap advertising.

Visit as many pet stock and lawn shows as possible. You will get new ideas and become better acquainted with other breeders.

Do not feed any hay for a day or so before you clean out the hutches. It is surprising how little hay and feed you will have to carry out as they will eat most everything in sight. Throw the cleanings to the chickens, if you have any, they will pick out every particle of grain that is left. It is also excellent fertilizer for the lawn.

Do not sell any stock for breeders you would not use yourself.

Feed the oats in vessels. There are a number on the market that it is almost impossible for them to waste the feed.

Feed brood sows heavy while nursing, also young growing stock.

When you have laboratory stock or poor quality specimens dispose of them as soon as possible as they are occupying room you can use to better advantage.

You will have to keep continually building up your stock. For instance, if your stock is short on type get a specimen that is strong in type. This same rule holds true in all other points. We have sows we keep to improve type and size only.

You will make mistakes, but profit by them. No one can tell when a cross is made what the results will be.

Do not mate your sows for ten days or two weeks after the young are weaned.

Leave the boars with the sows until you are sure they are mated. Some breeders use one male with two or three females. We have used one male with ten or twelve females and had good results.

Only breed to good healthy stock. Your future success depends upon it.

Do not overcrowd. Sows can be kept together while not in breeding hutches, using one large pen for them.

Boars to be used as breeders must be kept separate after six or eight weeks old, as they will fight and injure each other.

In skinning the cavy, cut around the hind legs, then down crotch on both sides, cut down stomach to point of under jaw, then pull hide down over head, cut ears from body and pull hide free from body. Salt and lay away until you are ready to tan them. Many are tanning the hides themselves. "Young's Easy Tanning Compound" is recommended. It is a good, strong hide, and can be used for many purposes, making nice mats for the library table, trimmings, etc.

Cavies as food. We have never used cavies as food, but know a number of people who have and they speak very highly of them as having a rich, delicate flavor.

In handling a cavy always catch it around the neck and shoulders, but do not squeeze them, rest its rump on the other hand. To show a cavy, place him on your hand, permitting the hind legs to drop between the fingers, holding legs snug in this way. Often have people wondered why they would set on my hand so nice and quiet.

How to tell the sex. Quite often this is a puzzle to the beginner. In the old animals this is quite easy if a person is at all familiar with the cavy, but when you desire to wean them at three or four

weeks old, one must have some knowledge of it. We hold the animal with our left hand, holding belly up, right hand around rump or rear part of body. On the male near the vent is a small projection resembling the point of a pencil, place thumb close to this and press down pulling slightly forward towards head. It is very easy to determine sex by this method.

Do not let your brood sows get too fat.

If your young stock looks unhealthy and jerks head from side to side having fits, this is usually caused by too close inbreeding and it is necessary that you introduce new blood.

Keep your cavies where dogs, cats and rats cannot get to them.

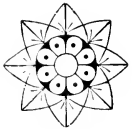
Start with only a few, learning how to care for them adding more as your learn.

In publishing this book we have tried to give you facts as we find them and not copying from other books. If this book meets with your approval tell your friends.

In Conclusion

I have endeavored to make these pages plain and to the point. I am heart and soul in the cavy business. I want to see cavies on every farm, on every back lot. The government needs cavies for experimental purposes, and the cavy breeders of America must meet a demand double that in normal times. Will you help us to put it over? We don't want the cavy to be in the columns that are marked "shortage." If I can help you to make the right start, if the instructions you have just read are clear to you and will enable you to accomplish something with cavies I will feel content. On the other hand, if you have any criticism to offer, please let me have it. If there is anything not clear to you, let me know. It will be a pleasure to "set you right," and criticism—well, friends, I love it.

—James E. Young.



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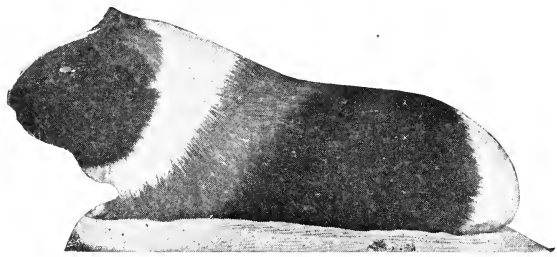

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